



## *Road to the Future*





## Road to the Future

**Welcoming the difference and accepting it as a challenge is the mission of each and every one of us!**

«The APSA assumes its unique mission to continue to respond to the needs of children, youngsters and adults with Asperger Syndrome (AS) in the context of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

We will continue our work of raising awareness, dissemination and training, making known the reality of AS, in order to be better understood and accepted. We believe that we can change mentalities and promote attitudes that foster the acceptance of diversity and the promotion of inclusion.

We consider that intervention as early as possible can contribute to better school integration and socialisation of the child. Since it is at school that the first problems are felt, especially in terms of social interaction and behaviour, it is fundamental to pay attention to certain warning signs that are characteristic of AS. Hence, the training of education professionals and technicians is a priority for APSA.

Likewise, we highlight the importance of raising awareness and dissemination among health professionals and technicians. Although it is framed within the spectrum of autism, Asperger Syndrome has specific and differentiated diagnostic criteria, and the earlier the diagnosis and intervention is made, the more likely it is that positive results will be achieved for the future of these children, and also for parents and relatives of people with AS.

It is thus obvious that we need to continue to dialogue with the health and education authorities, in order to foster synergies for joint work. On the other hand, we will not stop promoting the inclusion of Asperger Syndrome in higher education curricula, particularly in areas considered as core: education, health and social sciences.

Finally, we look at youngsters and adults with AS and their families. We will not stop promoting actions and projects that facilitate the development of social skills and professional skills.

“The Casa Grande will be a reference and, above all, the hope of building a future life project, with greater autonomy and dignity.”

APSA assumes its unique mission to continue to respond to the needs of children, youngsters and adults with Asperger Syndrome (AS), framed in Autism Spectrum Disorders. We will continue our work of spreading awareness, dissemination and training, making known the reality of AS, so that it is better understood and accepted. We believe that we can change mentalities and promote attitudes that foster the acceptance of diversity and the promotion of inclusion.»

Maria da Piedade Ramalho Libano Monteiro  
President of the APSA Board



# The Asperger Syndrome

**Asperger Syndrome is a disturbance of the autism spectrum, in which there is no cognitive deficit and is manifested mainly by changes in social interaction, communication and behaviour.**

When we meet someone, we form an opinion about that person. Just by seeing that person, we can guess their age and social status. From her facial expression or the tone of her voice, we can know if the person is happy, angry or sad. If we listen to her talking, we can guess about her background and culture. From the way the person dresses and from her posture, we can find out what her professional activity is. However, not everyone is born with this ability.

People with Asperger's Syndrome (AS), framed in Autism Spectrum Disorders (PEA), have difficulty decoding the signals that most people deem as evident and logical. This represents a problem of communication and interaction with others.

SOCIAL INTERACTION	COMMUNICATION	BEHAVIOUR
		
DIFFICULTY IN SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY AT THE LEVEL OF ABSTRACT THOUGHT DIFFICULTY IN EMPATHY	PECULIARITIES IN THE SPEECH AND IN THE WAY OF BEING SENSORY CHANGES DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING AND EXPRESSING EMOTIONS RIGIDITY OF THOUGHT	ROUTINE OR REPETITIVE BEHAVIOUR LIMITED AND SPECIFIC INTERESTS MOTOR DECOORDINATION DIFFICULTY OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL AUTO-REGULATION

**February 18 | International Asperger Syndrome Day**

# APSA

Portuguese Association of Asperger Syndrome



It was on November 7th 2003 that the APSA - Portuguese Association of Asperger Syndrome was born, a non-profit association, registered as a Private Social Welfare Institution (IPSS). A group of parents of children and youngsters with Asperger Syndrome (AS), feeling the need to respond to their anxieties and their concerns, and for not having a response that could meet the specificity of this problem, decided to undertake and assume as their mission to create an association that was simultaneously a space for the promotion of opportunities and hope for a decent future.

### *We assume as our Mission:*

Promoting the support and social integration of people with Asperger Syndrome, favouring the conditions and enabling an autonomous and dignified life.

### *Our Vision is:*

To have a society that accommodates difference and where people with Asperger Syndrome have equal opportunities and feel accepted, respected and fulfilled.

### *We base our mission on the following Principles and Values:*

- **Human dignity.**
- **Respect:** to believe in the other's abilities and potentialities.
- **Solidarity:** responsibility for the good of the other.
- **Social justice:** non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for difference, integration.
- **Commitment:** responsibility, initiative, loyalty to identity and organization.
- **Cooperation:** team spirit, participation and involvement of everyone, co-responsibility, development of partnerships.
- **Trust:** to create an environment of mutual trust between us and all those who support us.

**We help to play down this difference which is not clear-cut but does exist!**

# Strategic Guidelines



### *Strategic Plan 2016-2020:*

The Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 results from the collective effort of committing ourselves to common goals and to the efficient and coordinated use of available resources, making it possible to face the challenges that lie ahead in the next five years. Therefore, the preparation of the Plan was an element of mobilisation and dynamisation of the organisation, as well as to value what people with AS and their families and our partners say about APSA and the responses we have developed.

Always having as a reference framework our Mission, Vision and Values, the development of all our activity is strategically based on three main pillars of intervention, hereby to follow and deepen:

• **Spreading awareness and dissemination:** to increase the knowledge of Asperger Syndrome and the role of APSA, so that there is a better understanding and inclusion of the person with AS.

• **Early intervention:** intervene as soon as possible is a priority, insofar as it enables preventive and rehabilitative actions.

• **Professional and social integration of youngsters and adults with AS:** through the Casa Grande project, it is possible to enable autonomy and insertion in active life, promoting the right to participation and social inclusion.

The strategic framework is based on 8 Strategic Axes:

- **Awareness and Dissemination**
- **Family**
- **Intervention**
- **Employability**
- **Training**
- **Networking and Partnerships**
- **Communication, Marketing and Sustainability**
- **Innovation and Development**

# Awareness and Dissemination



It is a strategic objective to promote the awareness and dissemination of Asperger Syndrome (AS) in society in general, increasing AS literacy, in order to contribute to a better understanding, acknowledgement and inclusion of the person with AS.

The work we have carried out over the years has mainly focused on the dissemination and information about Asperger Syndrome (AS), framed in the Autism Spectrum Disorders (PEA), in the awareness and training of professionals and technicians of education and health, business employees, as well as support for parents and families.

We highlight the following actions:

- **Seagull Project: awareness actions in schools and companies**
- **Translating and Editing Books**
- **Cycles of Meetings, Seminars and Congresses**
- **Actions of Training and Information for Professionals**
- **Awareness Campaigns with Schools, Hospitals and Health Centres: "It is not clear-cut but it's there", "Bullying in Autism", "There is More in a Person with AS than We See".**

# CRapsa

APSA Resource Centre



For its awareness, outreach, and training activities, APSA offers a series of programs and activities within the CRAPsa - APSA Resource Centre.

This is a Resource Centre for support, referral and intervention, specialising in Asperger Syndrome. It seeks to respond to the needs felt by parents and families, education and health technicians, and other people who somehow deal with people with AS.

The following programs and activities are particularly important to mention:

- **Listen and Guide**
- **Social service**
- **Parents time**
- **CAMP'Apsa**
- **Legal support**
- **APSA meetings**

## Innovation and Development

APSA is committed to generating innovation and development, valuing people as agents of change and social transformation. In this sense:

- It encourages and values its own innovative processes and methodologies, in view of the construction of the **APSA Intervention Model**.
- Promotes actions of **Public Influence** in strategic sectors and according to the experience acquired and needs felt, such as public information, consultation, dialogue and alternative proposals for action with a view to making people with AS being heard by political decision-makers.
- Promotes participation in **networks** and local, national and international platforms that favour the creation of chains of knowledge and shared value. It develops new Strategic Partnerships, based on shared resource management, mutual learning and added value.
- It promotes greater knowledge by collaborating in studies and research. It develops partnerships with higher education institutions in order to deepen the **research** on Asperger Syndrome within the disorders of the autism spectrum.

# Project Casa Grande

## Community Integration Activities (AIC)

### ATIVIDADES DE INTEGRAÇÃO COMUNITÁRIA (AIC)



**TRAINING OF SOCIAL COMPETENCES**  
(individual and group)



**TRAINING OF FUNCTIONAL AUTONOMY**  
Personal (eg. tying shoes or walking with house keys) and communitarian (eg. Using public transportation, go to the ATM)



**OFFICE OF THE DISCOVERIES**  
(every dynamic group play and pedagogical activities, in which one works the relationship and reciprocity)



**THEMATIC ATELIERS**  
(computer science, plastic expression, music, horticulture and gardening, sewing)



**INTERNAL LABOUR ACTIVITY**  
(experiences in Casa Grande departments)



**TRAINING OF FUNCTIONAL AUTONOMY**  
(intervention at the level of drawing up a CV, training for job interviews)



**COMMUNITY-SCHOOL PROGRAM**  
(psychologists, mediators in the school structure to follow the course of the student)



**EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAM**  
(experience for the discovery of professional vocations and the transition to appropriate programs of socio-professional integration, in partnership with the "Empresas Receptivas")

For the accomplishment of its mission to support and integrate Youngsters and Adults with Asperger Syndrome, framed in the disturbances of the spectrum of autism, over 16 years old, the Casa Grande project has been operating since January 2014 through the APSA.

The Casa Grande is a unique, innovative and differentiating space that enables People with AS to autonomy, employability and social and community inclusion.

We have a multidisciplinary team with recognised experience in Asperger Syndrome, which promotes an individualized and mediated intervention in any context. Casa Grande provides our Youngsters/Adults with social skills, their functional and community autonomy, as well as experiences in social and community contexts, mediated by specialised technicians, through a series of intervention programs, the Community Integration Activities (AIC).

Thanks to an individualised intervention, adapted to the characteristics and profile of each Youngsters/Adult, it is possible to transition to training programs and professional integration, meeting their needs.

We thus have the **Community School Program**, which makes it possible for some of the youngsters to continue their school career, whether attending traineeships, professional courses or even entering university education. On the other hand, we highlight the **Employability Program** through which we promote experiences aimed at the discovery of professional vocations and the transition to appropriate programs of socio-professional integration, in partnership with companies.

The Casa Grande constitutes a space of opportunity and hope in the construction of a project of a dignified life.

Services for the Community:

- Sewing Arrangements
- Sale of Casa Grande products: sewing, horticulture, herbs, cooking
- Room Rental





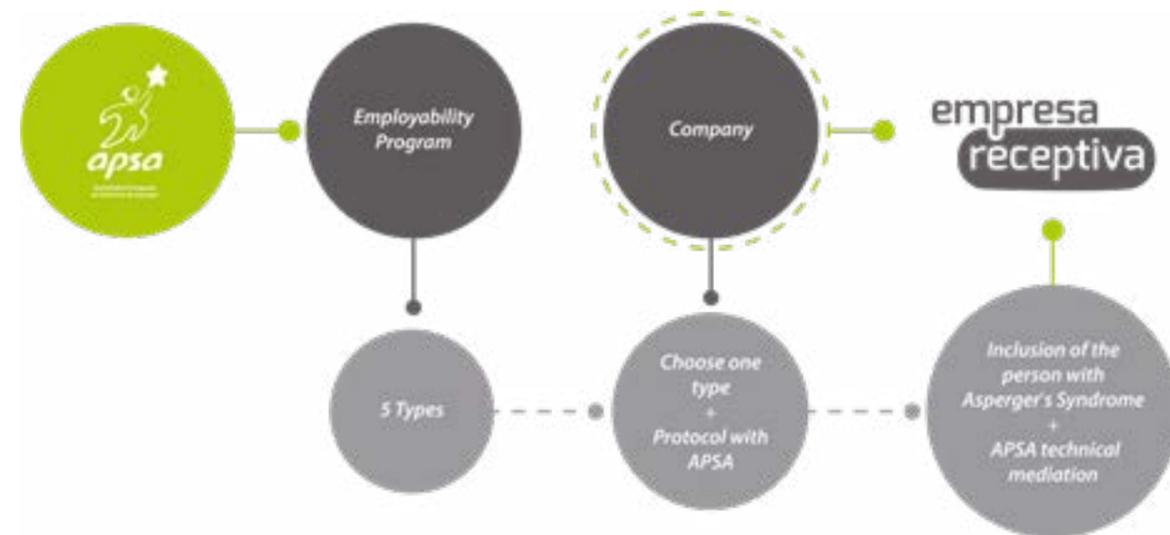
***I will mark the difference  
wherever I go!***

# Employability Program

It is a priority for APSA to contribute to the professional integration of people with AS, hence the development of partnerships with companies and public and private institutions that allow training in a work context and integration into the labour market.

It is a clear call for the **Social Responsibility** of companies to facilitate the admission of people with AS, revealing openness to diversity and inclusion, valuing equal opportunities and individual capacities, and contributing to the construction of a more just and solidary society.

APSA, in 2015, created and registered the brand **Empresa Receptiva**® to value companies that join the Employability Program:



As regards standard responses APSA's Employability Program is innovative since its implementation implies a transversal monitoring of the FAMILY-YOUTH-COMMUNITY triad, impelling a strong social impact in each one of them.

Success factors include: mentoring and mediation that allow for the overcoming of difficulties on the part of the Youngster/Adult and the host team in the company; the suitability of each Youngster/Adult's functional profile and the possible modality of employability, whether on the part of the Youngster or the companies adhering to the Program.

**This intervention is fully mediated by specialised technicians, trained to the characteristics of the AS, being a great support for the person with AS and for the host team of the company, facilitating the integration in THE work context and the success of the inclusion.**



## 2015



QUINTA D'AVÓ | Experience in Assembly/Packaging Line

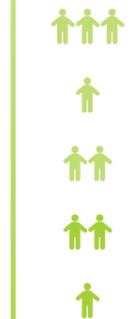
REN | Unpaid Internship in Accounting and Programming

JERÓNIMO MARTINS | Professional Training in Database and Kitchen

CASA DO INGLEZ | Community Experience in Restoration

ACCENTURE | Work contract in Computer/Robotics with renovation

## 2016



REFEIÇÕES DESCOMPLICADAS | Kitchen helper

SANTANDER TOTTA | Work contract in the Administrative Area with renovation

RECOLTE | Community Experience in the Gardening Area

HOSPITAL DA LUZ | Internship in the Human Resources department

## 2017



CIÊNCIA VIVA | Community Experience

JUNTA DE FREGUESIA DE BENFICA | Community Experience in the Library



# Key Indicators

- track record- APSA's route



More than  
**40.000**  
people with Asperger's  
Syndrome in Portugal

  
**398** members



Over  
**5.000**  
participants in the school community, including teachers,  
assistant technicians, educators in the "Gaivota" sensitization  
sessions in schools across the country

**450**   
families supported by APSA services, between "Listen  
and Orient" sessions to "Parents's Time" and Social Work

Over  
**100**  
  
volunteers involved with APSA

  
**13.500**  
Facebook followers and  
other social networks

**7**   
books translated  
and published

## Networking and Partnerships

APSA promotes participation in local, national and international networks and platforms that foster the exchange of experiences, mutual learning and the creation of shared knowledge.



## Financial Entities





*Associação Portuguesa  
de Síndrome de Asperger*

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